



Directorate of  
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## Near East and South Asia Review

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30 January 1987

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30 January 1987

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Near East and  
South Asia Review [Redacted]

25X1

30 January 1987

	Page
Articles	
Lebanon: Halat—A Christian Alternative to Beirut Airport? [Redacted]	1

25X1  
25X1

Maronite Christian hardliners are trying to convert Halat airport, a military airstrip built on a portion of the coastal highway north of Beirut, into a civilian alternative to Muslim-controlled Beirut airport. Given the political and logistic obstacles, the project is unlikely to get off the ground. [Redacted]

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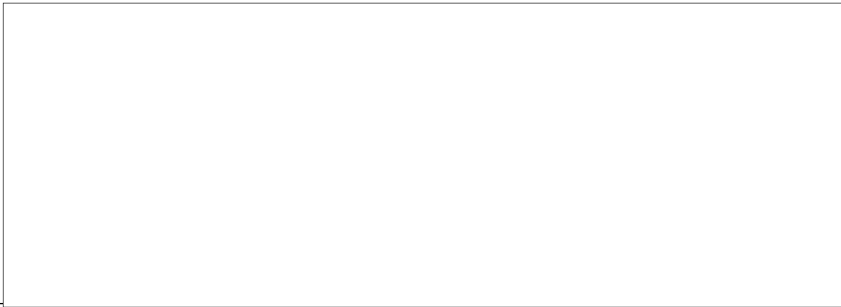
Afghanistan: The Sarandoy—A Shadow Army [Redacted]	5
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The Afghan sarandoy—a combination police–light infantry force responsible to the Ministry of Interior—has been given an increasingly large role over the last year in maintaining urban security and assisting the regular army in combat operations. The sarandoy’s performance has been mixed at best. [Redacted]

25X1

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Briefs	
Pakistan: Narcotics Trafficking and the Military [Redacted]	13
Sri Lankan Tamils and the South Indian Drug Trade [Redacted]	13

25X1  
25X1

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*Some articles are preliminary views of a subject or speculative, but the contents normally will be coordinated as appropriate with other offices within CIA. Occasionally an article will represent the views of a single analyst; these items will be designated as noncoordinated views.* [Redacted]

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## Near East and South Asia Review

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### Articles

#### Lebanon: Halat—A Christian Alternative to Beirut Airport?

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Maronite Christian hardliners are trying to convert Halat airport, a military airstrip built on a portion of the coastal highway outside Christian East Beirut, into a civilian alternative to Muslim-controlled Beirut International Airport. If successfully converted, Halat would promote increased Christian self-sufficiency and would be a major step in cementing the de facto partition of Lebanon. Completion of the Halat project would free the Christian community from its reliance on security-poor Beirut airport, and increased military use of Halat would also be possible.

Halat is home to Lebanon's aging Hawker-Hunter fleet and most of the Air Force helicopter fleet. Although the runway was improved in early 1986 to accommodate civilian aircraft, the approach path is inadequate because of buildings that require the pilot to descend steeply. The runway width is minimally adequate for maneuverable military planes but unsafe for wider civilian planes, and obstructions line both sides of the runway.

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The struggle to open Halat has become another violent episode in Lebanon's 12-year-old civil war. The Christian Lebanese Forces militia shelled Beirut airport in January 1987 to force the opening of Halat,

The decision to build a civilian airport in the Lebanese Christian heartland catering to Christian travelers was mainly prompted by the perils associated with reaching Beirut airport on the southern edge of the capital's Muslim-controlled western sector and the precarious security situation there. Most Christians are afraid to travel through West Beirut to get to the airport. The only other option is to travel by commercial ferry from Jounieh to Larnaca, Cyprus. Although possible, this is difficult because the service is slow, unreliable, and fairly expensive.

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The US Embassy in Beirut reported that Middle East Airlines, Lebanon's national carrier, has agreed to fly out of Halat pending governmental approval. The Christians, however, face stiff political opposition from the Muslims, an inability to obtain international landing rights or war insurance for flights out of Halat, and various technical problems.

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#### Current Status

Halat airport, located 28 kilometers northeast of Beirut in the Christian enclave, serves as a military airbase for the Lebanese Air Force and as an occasional landing strip for government officials and businessmen. The airport consists of an 1,800-meter strip cut out of the Beirut-Tripoli coastal highway. The Air Force has been forced to use Halat since 1976 when Syrian forces occupied Riyak, the major Lebanese airbase.

The Halat controversy began in February 1986 when Dany Chamoun, head of the National Liberal Party, along with Maronite financier Roger Tamraz and others began to show interest in Halat. The runway was expanded and an ambitious international effort begun to obtain landing rights. To lure a commercial carrier, project backers invested in strengthening and enlarging the runway and purchased some avionics and communications equipment. Tamraz contacted several countries in Europe and the Mediterranean to obtain approval for charter flights. The governments of Belgium and Luxembourg, understandably

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NESA NESAR 87-004  
30 January 1987

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concerned about security and attuned to the political contentiousness of the issue, have both rejected the establishment of airlinks to Halat.

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**An Emerging Issue**

In the course of a television interview on 14 January, Lebanese forces leader Samir Ja'Ja based his position on humanitarian grounds, arguing that Christians are forced to travel to and from Cyprus and Damascus, entailing extra expense and hardship. Ja'Ja also claimed that, if Halat is opened for general civilian travel, it would bring in millions of dollars to Middle East Airline's obvious advantage. Ja'Ja did not object

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to other airports functioning as civilian airports, as long as Halat does. The US Embassy in Beirut reported in January 1987 that, as part of efforts to push the opening of Halat airport, Christian politicians had begun promoting the opening of three airports for Lebanon—Beirut, Halat, and Kle'at. The latter is located about 15 kilometers from Tripoli, homebase of Prime Minister Karami, and currently is a Syrian-controlled military airbase. Offering to support opening Kle'at to civilian air traffic is a Lebanese Forces ploy to reduce Karami's objections to opening Halat. [REDACTED]

Middle East Airlines chairman Salim Salam was quoted in January 1987 in the Beirut press as agreeing to allow his company to use Halat if approval is granted by the government, which is extremely unlikely. Salam had previously refused Christian requests for his airline to operate out of Halat. [REDACTED]

#### Opposition

The view among the Druze and Sunnis of West Beirut is that Halat represents a Christian attempt to establish a de facto Christian ministate with control over all areas of life. In the view of Prime Minister Karami and those who hope to retain some vestige of central governmental authority, any plan to split the country further must be checked. [REDACTED]

Syria is also opposed to a wider role for Halat airport because this would represent another step in the partitioning of Lebanon, detracting from Syria's peacemaker image. Although Syria has not spoken out publicly against Halat, when President Gemayel's aircraft landed at Halat this past summer, the field was shelled from behind Syrian lines. [REDACTED]

Aside from political opposition, numerous technical problems would have to be solved if Halat is to become a commercial airport. The runway may not meet international safety standards for medium-range airplanes. The scheme also has foundered on the inability of its promoters to obtain landing, licensing, insurance, and traffic rights. [REDACTED]

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#### Growing Public Debate Over Halat

*Various confessional leaders in Lebanon have weighed in on the Halat issue:*

- *Shia leader Nabih Barri opposes Halat, saying that President Gemayel recommended the airport be expanded and that the President was exerting pressure on neighboring landowners in an attempt to expand the airport.*
- *Camille Chamoun, Christian former President and Minister of Finance, has formally requested that customs open a post at the airport.*
- *Dany Chamoun, president of the National Liberal Party, is one of the staunchest advocates of establishing Halat as a symbol of a separate Christian enclave.*
- [REDACTED]  
*Cyprus to promote Halat at the request of the President.*
- *Druze leader Walid Junblatt has made clear that as Minister of Public Works he will not authorize the operation of Halat airport.* [REDACTED]

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#### Outlook and Implications

If successful, Halat would set a precedent for other confessional groups. As part of their strategy, the Christians have held out the possibility of opening other civilian airports to make Halat more acceptable. If other groups follow the lead of the Christians by clamoring for their own airport, this would further the trend toward partition. Moreover, if the Halat project succeeds, opportunities would widen for more Christian involvement in illicit trade, arms smuggling, and drug trafficking. Even if they fail, Halat and similar efforts steal time and energy from reconciliation efforts. [REDACTED]

Christian efforts to foster their independence will continue. The Christian population supports efforts to make divided Lebanon livable and to expand their outlets to the world. Given the political and logistic obstacles, however, we doubt that the project to transform Halat into a commercial airport will get off the ground soon, if ever.

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## Afghanistan: The Sarandoy— A Shadow Army [ ]

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The Afghan sarandoy—a combination police—light infantry force responsible to the Ministry of Interior—has been given an increasingly large role over the last year in maintaining urban security and assisting the regular army in combat operations.

[ ] the sarandoy's performance has been, in our view, mixed at best, and the force is beset by a number of problems—recruitment, low morale, and equipment shortages—which will limit its effectiveness in the future. Because Interior Minister Gulabzoi, the sarandoy chief, is increasingly prominent in regime politics, the sarandoy could serve as an important tool in support of his political activities, particularly if he decided to make a grab for power. [ ]

### Background

The sarandoy was formed shortly after the Marxist coup in April 1978 to replace the previous police apparatus. It has been manned largely by Khalqi faction members of the ruling People's Democratic Party, according to an Afghan defector. For the first few years of the war, [ ] the sarandoy played virtually no role in the counterinsurgency. Beginning in late 1984, however, the force was expanded, given new weaponry, and assigned more tasks, apparently as part of a regime effort to expand its paramilitary forces. [ ]

[ ] we estimate total sarandoy manpower at 15,000 to 20,000, about 35-40 percent of the authorized level, according to an Afghan defector. [ ]

### Combat Activity

The primary sarandoy combat role is support for regular army activity, in our view. [ ] [ ] at least some sarandoy units participated in most Afghan army operations last year. According to the US Embassy in Kabul, the sarandoy units, led by Interior Minister Gulabzoi,

were involved in attacks on two cities in the Shomali Plain, north of Kabul, last fall. There have been recent indications that sarandoy forces have acted independently. In December 1986 sarandoy units were conducting independent reconnaissance operations in the Panjsher Valley. The sarandoy's urban security role may expand in 1987. Gulabzoi was given direct responsibility for the security of Kabul city in late November, according to the US Embassy. The regime has admitted that the sarandoy has suffered 6,500 killed during the war, according to a Soviet press account. [ ]

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### Command and Control

Although sarandoy units are administered by the Interior Ministry, they receive their operational orders from the provincial government, according to defector reporting. [ ]

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In some circumstances, however, provincial sarandoy groups may come under the command of the army's chief of staff or the local army corps commander,

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Soviet advisers play a large role in sarandoy units, according to an Afghan defector. Advisers are posted to all infantry, mountain, and guard units, with some advisers assigned to technical offices. Soviet officials are responsible for personnel transfers and promotions, according to a defector source. [ ]

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NESA NESAR 87-004  
30 January 1987



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### Organization of the Sarandoy

*Sarandoy units are divided into two forces, security units primarily responsible for urban security and strike units that usually support army operations, according to defector reporting.* [ ]

#### Provincial Security

*Provincial security commands are based in province capitals and typically include a headquarters, a chief Soviet adviser, and offices for political affairs, security, crime, logistics, finance, statistics, records, ordnance, and technical assistance, according to an Afghan defector. The sarandoy, in our estimation, is the largest of the paramilitary forces—including border brigades, tribal militias, and party units—that the regime has developed recently.* [ ]

*Provincial sarandoy are responsible for general law enforcement and firefighting, according to an Afghan defector. They man static guard posts, roadchecks, and key economic targets such as the Aynak copper mine in Helmand Province, [ ] although overall responsibility for road security remains in Soviet hands.* [ ]

*In some tribal areas, sarandoy units are supplemented by a volunteer police force, the opratifi, [ ] These units, first deployed last summer, are used normally for local security, although in some instances they have been deployed outside their home area.* [ ]

#### Strike Units

*Provincial strike units are located in areas of high insurgent activity, according to an Afghan defector. The largest is in Kabul Province, where a lieutenant general commands a regiment, a reinforced battalion, a mountain battalion, and two to three guard*

*battalions. These regiments are comparatively small, however, with only 400 to 430 personnel, including a large number of noncombatants, according to an Afghan defector. Provincial strike units are, in turn, subdivided into two types, according to a defector source.* [ ]

*In provinces other than Kabul where guerrilla forces are strong, a "Type A" provincial strike unit under the command of a major general is deployed. These consist of at least a reinforced battalion and a guard unit. In mountainous provinces, an additional mountain battalion may also be deployed. A typical "Type A" province reinforced battalion consists of four police companies and one armor company, according to an Afghan defector. The armor company normally employs a mix of 10 BRDM and BTR-60 armored personnel carriers. The company also has an 82-mm mortar platoon and reconnaissance and signal platoons.* [ ]

*A "Type B" provincial strike unit command is deployed where insurgent resistance is judged to be weaker. These formations consist of two battalions under the command of a colonel. A "Type B" province battalion typically has three police companies and an armor company. The armor company has six BRDMs. It also has platoons for 82-mm mortars, reconnaissance, and signal operations. Ordinarily, at the district level those sarandoy units are deployed in company and platoon strength, respectively, while a subdistrict, if necessary, may have a squad. These units are seriously under strength and provide little more than a symbolic presence in the area, according to a defector source.* [ ]

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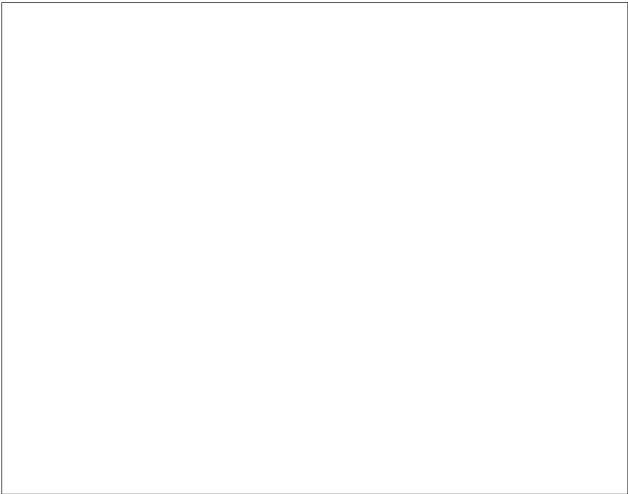
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**Continuing Problems**

Although there is little evidence regarding sarandoy performance, they suffer from many of the same problems facing the army and other paramilitary forces:

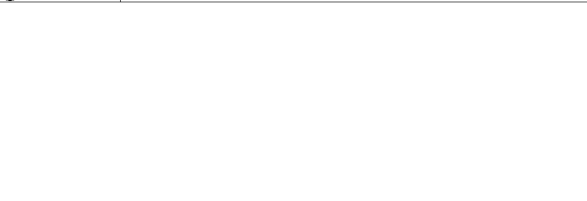
- *Lack of skilled leadership.* Only 5 percent of all sarandoy commanders have received the equivalent of a college education. About 25 percent of all officers are high school graduates, with the remainder minimally educated, according to an Afghan defector. Only 15 percent of all noncommissioned officers are regarded as being marginally literate, with the remainder and most of the conscripts illiterate.
- *Conscription problems.* The sarandoy has difficulty in fielding more conscripts because its efforts take second place to those of the regular army, which also has problems in finding recruits. The sarandoy has lowered its recruiting standards, in some cases conscripting those well beyond the normal draft age, [redacted] One 50-year-old conscript was impressed in a sweep in Paghman and was then quickly sent to a combat unit in Qandahar.
- *Desertions.* Over half of all those drafted eventually desert with their weapons to join insurgent groups, according to an Afghan defector. Deployment of troops away from their home province has proved to be an ineffective desertion countermeasure.



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- *Insurgent penetrations.* We believe that many sarandoy units have been effectively penetrated by insurgent forces, and some outposts manned by the sarandoy have reached an accommodation with the insurgents. There have also been cases of active complicity between sarandoy officials and the guerrillas. [redacted]

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**Gulabzoi's Growing Influence**

Although the sarandoy's military effectiveness will, in our view, remain limited, the force may come to play a greater role in politics as the influence of its leader, Interior Minister Gulabzoi, grows. Gulabzoi has become an increasingly influential figure on the Afghan political scene, according to the US Embassy in Kabul. The sarandoy is the largest military force directly under his control, and, in our view, he could employ them to further his political ambitions. For now control over the sarandoy buttresses Gulabzoi's role as the major Khalqi decisionmaker. Sarandoy units in key urban areas, for example, could be crucial should Gulabzoi decide to mount a coup attempt or attempt to fend off a Parchami bid to oust him. [redacted]

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**Outlook**

The Afghan regime will continue to explore ways of using the sarandoy more effectively. The sarandoy are inexpensive to equip and probably can avoid much of the traditional Afghan suspicions of regular forces. They provide a semblance of government control and free Afghan troops from static defensive positions. They will continue to have a minimal impact, however, because of their low morale, manpower shortages, and ill-trained and ill-equipped personnel, in our view. [redacted]

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**Near East and  
South Asia Briefs**

<b>Pakistan</b>	<b>Narcotics Trafficking and the Military</b> [redacted]	25X1
	<p>Pakistani military courts have failed to sentence several officers arrested for smuggling substantial amounts of heroin, according to [redacted] reporting. Among 11 cases reviewed in the National Assembly in early January were the recent arrests of an Army major in possession of 200 kilograms of heroin (a record for Sind Province, where the seizure was made) and an Air Force lieutenant with more than 220 kilograms of heroin. In the months between their arrests and their court appearances, the officers escaped from the high-security facilities where they were being held. Pakistani officials investigating the escapes believe officials were bribed to facilitate the jailbreaks, [redacted]</p>	25X1 25X1
	<p>[redacted] and, because of the generally low level of military salaries, it is likely to grow over the near term. A middle-level military officer draws approximately \$255 per month in comparison with the several thousand dollars that can be earned participating in a large heroin delivery. We believe that recruitment for the services from those areas of Pakistan that traditionally grow and ship illicit drugs means that many members of the military have close family and ethnic ties to local smuggling networks. The two military jailbreaks, the failure of prosecutors to bring drug cases to trial, and the inability of Pakistan's judiciary to institute procedural changes to better handle narcotics prosecution all underscore Islamabad's unwillingness to risk addressing difficult antidrug issues.</p>	25X1
	[redacted]	
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	<b>Sri Lankan Tamils and the South Indian Drug Trade</b> [redacted]	25X1
	<p>Sri Lankan Tamils in South India form a major link in the contraband network that moves drugs and other illicit goods into Sri Lanka's Northern Province, [redacted] More than 150,000 Sri Lankan Tamils have fled to the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu over the last four years to escape ethnic violence. Many inhabit temporary refugee camps near major ports. [redacted] refugees in Mandapam camp smuggle drugs, including heroin, into Sri Lanka with the collaboration of at least one militant Tamil separatist group. Most of the drugs apparently are for domestic consumption, according to a US Embassy official in Colombo; some are shipped on to Western Europe and Australia. Tamil traffickers bribe corrupt Indian rail, customs, and port officials to move contraband through government port facilities. The main Tamil insurgent faction, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, dominates the</p>	25X1 25X1

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Tamil drug traffic through Madras, [redacted]  
Tigers work with local merchants to hide heroin in textile shipments shipped  
abroad by air. [redacted]

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Following a series of security crackdowns by the state government of Tamil Nadu in December 1986, Sri Lankan Tamil militants abandoned many training camps in South India and moved across the Palk Straits into Tamil-controlled areas of Sri Lanka's Jaffna Peninsula, according to sources of the US Consulate in Madras. Although part of the government of Tamil Nadu's rationale for encouraging their exit was the growing body of evidence linking the militants to regional drug smuggling, we do not believe that the shift of operations to Sri Lanka will effectively reduce the volume of drugs and contraband moving through southern India. [redacted]

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